

Michigan Department of Education

SAMPLE APPLICATION OF THE MDE PROGRAM EVALUATION TOOL *

What is the name of the strategy/program/initiative being evaluated?

Blueprint for Exceptional Writing (BEW), which is a master initiative to teach the writing process.

Description of the strategy/program/initiative being evaluated:

Blueprint for Exceptional Writing (BEW) is a method of teaching the writing process by motivating students to think, plan, and then write interesting and meaningful essays. BEW provides a master plan to help build successful writers and gives teachers a comprehensive set of strategies to improve student writing. The strategies used in BEW are especially effective with at-risk and special needs students due to the multi-sensory learning opportunities incorporated in the Master Plan. By presenting various proficient and non-proficient student work samples across the four genres, teachers have a suite of examples to help them implement BEW in their classroom. Modeling these strategies for students will guide them in becoming successful writers!

Need being addressed by the strategy/program/initiative:

Students in grades K-5 at the 'All Students Can Learn' School have made small gains in writing across the curriculum with the current writing strategy. None of the grades has made sufficient gains to eventually meet the state targets in writing as measured by state and local assessments. This is adversely affecting students' performance on other content area assessments that require writing skills. This strategy is promising and will assist our school community in raising expectations for all students and accelerating their writing skills.

Reason for selecting the strategy/program/initiative, including intended results:

The school community has tried a few other strategies in the past with minimal improvement in students' writing across the grades. This strategy/initiative is supported by evidence-based research including studies conducted in Michigan schools.

Intended results include:

1. Students in grades K-5 will increase their writing proficiency levels on local and state assessments by at least 7 percentage points annually.

2. All subgroups (students with disabilities, English learners, gender, racial/ethnic groups) will increase their writing proficiency levels on local and state assessments by at least 9 percentage points annually in order to narrow and close the achievement gaps.

Research supporting the strategy/program/initiative along with a brief summary:

http://www.mi.gov/documents/mde/BEW_401328_7.pdf

http://ptgmedia.pearsoncmg.com/images/9780205571741/support/BEW_ResearchPaper4pages.pdf

Kame'euni, E.J., & Carnine, D. (1998). *Effective Strategies that Accommodate Diverse Learners*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Marzano, Robert J., Debra J. Pickering and Jane E. Pollock. 2004. *Classroom instruction that Works: Research Based Strategies for Increasing Student Achievement*. ASCD.

Results of research studies show that students who were taught using the BEW intervention demonstrated significant learning gains at the conclusion of the studies. Specifically, general education students improved by a factor of 2 when the BEW intervention was used compared with those students taught using another intervention. Special needs/at-risk students improved by a factor of 11 when taught using the BEW intervention compared with the PW intervention. These improvements were shown to be statistically significant by the analysis of variance.

Based on research findings, BEW proved to be successful in improving the writing proficiency of all students, particularly at-risk students (including English language learners and students with special needs). Its emphasis on teaching expressive writing skills provides teachers with the verbal interactive methods and multi-sensory learning opportunities, to guide students in becoming successful writers, speakers, listeners, and readers.

IMPACT: What was the impact of strategy/program/initiative on students?

IN AN IDEAL STRATEGY/PROGRAM/INITIATIVE, the school's achievement results on state or district wide assessments meet proficiency standards. Achievement gaps between each of the relevant subgroups and their counterparts have been narrowed as proposed in the School Improvement Plan's measurable objectives. Interim assessment results indicate progress toward proficiency for all students to the satisfaction of all stakeholders.

- a) **What is the evidence and what does it show regarding achievement of the measureable objective for all students when compared to baseline state and local data?**

Evidence includes local interim assessments, MEAP, and weekly student writing samples demonstrating that students' results in writing have increased by 7-8% from the baseline data for all students. Therefore, our school met the anticipated objectives/outcomes for **all** students/aggregated results.

b) What is the evidence and what does it show regarding achievement of the measureable objective for subgroups and their counterparts when compared to baseline state and local data?

Item analysis of local assessments and performance level MEAP data indicated that performance of all sub-groups increased by 9% as compared to those not in the subgroups, except for students with disabilities placed in grades 3-5. These students' performance levels increased only by 7%.

c) What is the evidence and what does it show regarding stakeholder (staff, parents, students) satisfaction with the results?

Results of the special education students in the upper elementary grades did not improve. When investigating possible reasons for this outcome, we identified the need to create seamless articulation and coordination between the special education teacher and classroom teachers when teaching the BEW strategies.

CONCLUSION: If objectives were met, should the strategy/program/initiative be continued or institutionalized?

a) What is the evidence and what does it say regarding whether this was the right strategy/program/initiative to meet your needs? Based on the alignment study between BEW and state writing standards, achievement results from student writing samples (pre and post), and teacher feedback from the training and the coaching debriefs, there is strong evidence that this program is addressing the need of the majority of students.

b) What is the evidence and what does it say regarding whether the benefits of the strategy/program/initiative are sufficient to justify the resources it requires? Yes, the program is cost effective and the "Training the Trainer" model proved to be cost effective and an efficient way to maintain momentum and accelerate student achievement in writing across the curriculum.

c) What adjustments if any might increase its impact while maintaining its integrity? Adjustments are needed with regards to programming for students with disabilities. There is a need to accelerate special education students' skills by improving coordination efforts between special education teachers and classroom teachers.

b) What is needed to maintain momentum and sustain achievement gains?

Administrators need to maintain the current close collaboration they have in place with all stakeholders to ensure maintaining current progress. Follow up

training for participating staff should continue along with coaching to ensure implementation with fidelity.

- c) **How might these results inform the School Improvement Plan?** Writing is one of the major goals in our school improvement plan. Since we proposed to teach writing across the curriculum and writing entails critical thinking, organizing ideas, linking personal knowledge and experience to other content areas and to the world, we anticipate positive impact of this strategy/program/initiative on all other SIP goals. We believe that it will increase parent engagement in school activities and student learning which tie into another SIP goal. The training and coaching have been instrumental in creating a professional learning community in our school, which has become a model for other professional development initiatives, and will ensure better implementation of the school improvement plan.

If objectives **were not met**, consider the following analysis:

In our school, objectives for students with disabilities **were not met**. Therefore, we are addressing questions 1-4 to identify practices and activities that were not addressed and completed during the planning and implementation of this initiative.

1. READINESS: What was the readiness for implementing the strategy/ program/ initiative?

IN AN IDEAL STRATEGY/PROGRAM/INITIATIVE, stakeholders are well-prepared to implement. They have read and can articulate the research foundation, and regularly use the terms in conversation with each other, students, and with parents. Staff, students and parents express a high level of interest in, support for and commitment to the strategy/program/initiative. Specific concerns have been identified and solutions have been planned/implemented. Staff is able to seamlessly integrate the program within the context of other building/district initiatives.

- a) **What is the evidence and what does it show regarding stakeholder understanding of the need as well as stakeholder ability to articulate the research regarding the choice of the strategy/program/initiative?**
- Survey results indicated that response to the workshops was highly positive by almost all (96%) workshop participants and that their skill level has been significantly improved.
 - The few that were originally skeptical were eventually convinced, as evidenced by individual comments and workshop evaluations.
 - Minutes from follow-up training sessions confirmed that 100% of teachers and 87% of surveyed parents are able to clearly articulate the research behind this program.
 - Majority of participants (99%) appreciated the fact that the workshop was

supported by research-based articles and the BEW book, because having this convenient reference in the classroom raised confidence levels regarding the ability to teach and sustain these strategies.

b) What is the evidence and what does it show regarding stakeholders having a shared vision and purpose for the work and a strong commitment to the strategy/program/initiative?

- All workshop participants actively participated in discussions and asked probing questions that indicated 100% commitment to the principles of the program.
- Answers to survey questions given to all stakeholders confirmed full commitment to implementing the program on a daily basis.

c) What is the evidence and what does it show regarding how stakeholder concerns were identified and addressed?

- The concerns primarily centered on whether the program would motivate students and encourage the participation of parents and the school community-at-large. This concern was addressed by displaying student work in hallways and at parent meetings and by sending students' writing samples to their homes.
- Emails and written communications sent to parents indicated that they were informed of strategies and activities they could complete with their students at home in order to ensure successful implementation.
- The four teachers who were reluctant to implement were provided additional model lessons and coaching as evidenced by agendas and minutes from these professional learning opportunities.

d) What is the evidence and what does it show regarding the ability of staff and administrators to integrate the strategy/program/initiative with existing work?

- Written documents (agendas and training packets) showed that the workshops demonstrated to staff how the BEW supports and supplements other existing strategies/programs and how to take advantage of synergistic elements within the school improvement plan.
- Lesson plans and instructional units showed that the BEW strategies were used across the curriculum so that the principle could be used wherever the development of written material was required in alignment with the school improvement plan.
- Staff members' surveys indicated a high level of confidence (98%) in being able to integrate BEW with other strategies/programs.

Given the evidence you've assembled, choose an overall rating for Question 1: What is the readiness for implementing the program (strategy, program/initiative)?

Stakeholders are fully prepared to implement.	Support and commitment are generally high, but some concern or work remains.	Some promising elements exist, but are mixed with major gaps in knowledge or confidence.	Interest and/or commitment is low.
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NEXT STEPS: What action steps are needed to increase readiness to implement the program?

We will ensure that administrators and staff continue to discuss BEW principles at staff meetings and professional development release days, inform parents of the upcoming staff training sessions and conduct informational training for parents.

2. KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS: Did staff and administrators have the knowledge and skills to implement the strategy/program/initiative?

IN AN IDEAL STRATEGY/PROGRAM/INITIATIVE, personnel are able to clearly articulate what successful implementation looks and sounds like and how specific practices will change as a result of its implementation. Staff and administrators can articulate specific outcomes and specific criteria for evaluation. Personnel can demonstrate their ability to apply the knowledge and skills required to successfully implementing with fidelity, and professional learning opportunities are provided to address gaps in knowledge and skills.

a) What is the evidence and what does it show regarding staff and administrators' vision for how practice would change as a result of the strategy/ program/ initiative?

- Observations and agendas indicated that the BEW trainer modeled the teaching process for the teachers in the same way that the participants will model the teaching process for their students.
- Observations showed that teachers used role-playing techniques to learn each individual step in the BEW process.
- Participants left the workshops with a common vision of how the process is to be taught as evidenced by post workshop evaluations.
- Workshop evaluations and follow-up staff meeting minutes indicated that a shared vision has been established.

b) What is the evidence and what does it show regarding administrator knowledge and ability to monitor and assess the effectiveness of the strategy/ program/ initiative?

- Agendas and training packets administrators had on file from MDE-ISD trainings they attended on MDE's program evaluation tool.
- The agendas and minutes of presentations school administrators made to the School Board of Education and the central office administrative team wherein they outlined the basic concepts of the program and reviewed results of program evaluations conducted in other districts that had implemented the program.
- Agendas, sign in sheets and handouts from trainings showing that all school administrators participated in the BEW training and attended the demonstration lessons provided to teachers.
- The action plan school administrators provided to the School Improvement

Committee where they discussed the type of support school personnel would receive for program implementation.

c) What is the evidence and what does it show regarding the sufficiency of opportunities for staff to learn knowledge and skills identified as essential (the non-negotiable or acceptable variations of the elements) to the strategy/ program/ initiative?

- Evidence included a compilation of narrative and expository writing selections collected from workshop participants as a by-product of the workshop.
- Evaluations of the writing selections completed by the trainers in accordance with an evaluation rubric/criteria developed by participants.
- Agenda and minutes from special after-school workshops that were conducted for workshop participants where the evaluation of writing selections indicated a less than desirable understanding of the process.
- Minutes indicating one-on-one special training to clear up misunderstandings and misconceptions regarding the BEW key elements.
- A schedule of teachers' collegial visits to observe each other and debrief on their learning experiences.
- A schedule of common planning/PLC provided to teachers in order to review student work and derive implications for teacher as well as student learning.

d) What is the evidence and what does it show regarding staff's ability to apply the acquired knowledge and skills?

- Self-evaluations completed by participants when first applying the process to early writing assignments.
- A schedule of trainers' visits to classrooms for consultation and coaching when participants ran into self-identified difficulties.
- Copies of students' early writing selections that identified common problems that could be attributed to the teaching process.
- Agendas and minutes from coaching meetings provided to teachers whose students had difficulties in applying the BEW strategies.
- Principal's 'walkthroughs' and teachers' reflection notes from coaching sessions.

**Given the evidence you've assembled, choose an overall rating for Question 2:
Do participants have the knowledge and skills to implement the strategy/
program/initiative?**

Participants have sufficient knowledge and skills to succeed.	Much knowledge and skill are evident, but few skills (or some knowledge bases) still need work.	A solid start is documented, but many skill levels and much knowledge need to be acquired.	Participants are beginning to acquire the necessary knowledge and skills.
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NEXT STEPS: What action steps are needed to improve participants' knowledge and skills? We must stay true to the professional learning communities' (PLC) schedule and common planning time. We should continue to provide opportunities for collegial discussions, modeling and coaching to staff as well as additional demonstrations to parents during the implementation of the program.

3. OPPORTUNITY: Was there opportunity for high quality implementation of the strategy/program/initiative?

IN AN IDEAL STRATEGY/PROGRAM/INITIATIVE, building and district administrators provide significant support for project implementation. Sufficient funds have been allocated and continue to be managed by building principal and or program director. Adequate resources are available for full implementation including time for staff collaboration in various forms. Clearly defined structures/protocols are in place to collect and review formative implementation data.

a) What is the evidence and what does it show regarding the sufficiency of administrative support to achieve the intended results?

- Agendas and minutes from professional development meetings indicated that administrators provided timely feedback to staff who sought assistance and additional support in learning the skills.
- Written praise from administrators to staff who worked hard to make the program a success.
- Principal's comments to teachers following the review of interim assessment results.
- Protocols and summaries of instructional dialogues conducted between the principal and individual teachers.

b) What is the evidence and what does it show regarding the sufficiency of professional learning during implementation, e.g. modeling/coaching?

- Receipts for books provided to all participants in the training workshops.
- Copies of contracts with trainers who provided initial and subsequent job-embedded professional development.
- Schedules of grade-level and across grade-level common planning time for participants.

c) What is the evidence and what does it show regarding the sufficiency of resources - including financial and time - to achieve the intended results?

- Agendas from staff's biweekly meetings.
- Minutes from meetings summarizing shared ideas, concerns and success stories.
- Schedule of collegial visits and coaching sessions.

d) What is the evidence and what does it show regarding staff collaboration in support of the strategy/program/initiative?

- Samples of all students writing work reviewed by teams of teachers for both before and after program implementation.

- Results of students' scores on each student's writing selections housed in the local data system.
- Minutes of PLC time used to analyze students' results.
- A written report by staff of data analysis, findings and recommendations for improvement.

Given the evidence you've assembled, choose an overall rating for Question 3:

Is there opportunity for high quality implementation?

Necessary support and resource (time, funding & attention) are solidly in place).	Many necessary resources are aligned with program goals, but more are needed.	Basic resources and opportunities are available, but significant gaps need to be filled.	Opportunity and resources are just beginning to align in support of the program.
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NEXT STEPS: What action steps are needed to ensure opportunity for high quality implementation? We must continue to adhere to data protocols when examining student work to derive implications for adjusting the coaching and providing the necessary support to reluctant participants. We will continue to inform parents of their student's progress timely, and provide additional writing strategies parents can reinforce at home to support student learning.

3. IMPLEMENTED AS INTENDED: Was the strategy/program/initiative being implemented as intended?

*IN AN IDEAL STRATEGY/PROGRAM/INITIATIVE, all personnel involved in the program implement the strategies with fidelity according to the research, carrying out responsibilities by their proposed timelines. They use clearly defined **protocols** to collect and review formative implementation data to identify unintended consequences. Program leaders consider adjustments guided by implementation data **while maintaining the** integrity of results.*

a) What is the evidence and what does it show regarding the fidelity of implementation of the non-negotiable or acceptable variations of the elements of the strategy/program/ initiative, including timelines and responsibilities?

- A schedule showing teachers observations of each other using a modified lesson study approach, modeling mini-lessons in classrooms using the strategies being implemented.
- A professional development plan showing the coach's schedule of model lessons provided in each classroom and the names of grade level teachers who observed.
- Notes of de-briefing sessions for each model lesson provided by the coach discussing each teacher's progress toward acquiring the selected strategies.

- A schedule of principal's classroom 'walkthroughs' providing useful feedback and continued provision of necessary resources required for adequate implementation.
- BEW classroom-generated rubrics collected at each grade level and reviewed at staff meetings to determine if all important grade level writing features are being taught.
- Teachers identified areas in the rubrics that require further instruction and coaching, and continued provision of necessary resources required for adequate implementation.
- BEW classroom-generated rubrics have been collected at each grade level and reviewed at staff meetings to determine if all important grade level writing features are being taught.
- Teachers identified areas in the rubrics that require further instruction and coaching.

b) What is the evidence and what does it show regarding unintended consequences that may have occurred?

- Two teachers did not apply the BEW strategies on a daily basis as recommended and agreed upon by all staff members despite their initial commitment. Therefore, action steps will be determined.

c) What do student achievement results suggest for implementing/modifying the strategy/program/initiative? How might these affect the integrity of the results?

- Formative and summative achievement results suggest that students with disabilities in the upper elementary grades have not mastered the BEW strategies.
- The principal conducts walkthroughs daily and provide constructive feedback in these teachers' classrooms.
- PLC documents show that staff and administrators use clearly defined protocols to collect and review formative implementation data to identify unintended consequences.
- Minutes from staff meetings indicate that administrators have adjusted a few activities guided by implementation data. They reiterated to stakeholders the need to focus on the intended objectives and maintain the integrity of the implementation process.

Given the evidence you've assembled, choose an overall rating for Question 4:

All research-based elements have been implemented with fidelity following the proposed timelines.	Critical elements have been implemented, but work on consistency and depth remains.	The overall design is in place, but variations in practice are evident and may adversely affecting results.	Parts of the program are working, but others have yet to be implemented.
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NEXT STEPS: What action steps are needed to ensure faithful implementation of program plans? A coach has been assigned to visit, support and model to the two teachers on a weekly versus biweekly basis. We anticipate this adjustment will positively impact students' writing results and will not adversely affect the integrity of results. Administrators' walkthroughs with debriefings will take place following each visit. We will maintain the current practice of discussing selected parts of the BEW book to reinforce and sustain the implementation of the strategies.

*** This sample includes both scenarios: If the school/district met the intended objectives, and if the district did not meet the intended objectives**

For questions about this document and the MDE Evaluation Tool contact Shereen Tabrizi, Ph.D., Office of Field Services-MDE at 517 373-6066 or at TabriziS@michigan.gov.